

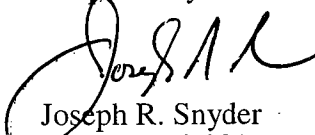
**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 56-68 are pending in this matter and presented for examination. The Examiner has indicated that an election of a species for prosecution on the merits is now required under 35 U.S.C. §121 as follows:

In response, Applicants elect GRO1 (SEQ ID NO:2) with traverse. Claims 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 64-67 and 68 are drawn to this species. No undue burden exist to search the other species, namely SLC26A2 (SEQ ID NO: 176). As such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to join both species and examine them on the merits.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request early action on the merits. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 925-472-5000.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph R. Snyder  
Reg. No. 39,381

TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND and CREW LLP  
Two Embarcadero Center, Eighth Floor  
San Francisco, California 94111-3834  
Tel: 925-472-5000  
Fax: 415-576-0300  
Attachments  
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